Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(1 December 1999)

In 1998, Commission officials undertook 2,581 missions to Strasbourg costing a total of €1,242,602. Thus the average cost per mission amounted to €481.44.

From January until May 1999 Commission officials undertook 1,122 missions to Strasbourg. Total costs were €598,310, i.e. €533.25 per mission.

The Commission has no information on missions by staff of the Council and the Parliament, enquiries will have to be addressed to each Institution.

The above figures relate to necessary transport and accommodation costs. Figures for what the Honourable Member describes as the ‘overall transfer operation’ including, for instance, a calculation of time used could not be obtained without the disproportionate use of public funds.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1738/99

by Umberto Bossi (TDI) to the Commission

(1 October 1999)

Subject: Lack of controls by Italy at border crossings with the Republic of Slovenia

The lack of controls by Italy at its borders with the Republic of Slovenia is alarming.

Apart from a number of international border crossings which are manned at all times and where identity documents are required, other border crossings are left unmanned from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., while rural crossing points are only manned in the mornings.

In the province of Gorizia, checks are operated at only five out of 22 crossings.

1. Is the Commission aware of this failure by Italy to carry out controls at the external frontiers of the Union?

2. Does it consider that as a result Italy is in breach of the Schengen agreements?

3. Could this lack of controls not make it easier for non-Community nationals to enter the Union’s territory?

4. Does the Commission feel it should intervene to compel Italy to carry out controls at its external frontiers?

Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission

(17 November 1999)

The ten Member States party to the Schengen agreement are required to apply in particular the provisions on surveillance and monitoring of external borders set out in Articles 3 et seq. of the Convention applying the Schengen agreement, and the decisions adopted by the Executive Committee which have been incorporated into the Union framework.

The arrangements involve the following in particular: external borders may in principle be crossed only at border crossing points during the fixed opening hours; the border crossing points and opening hours are fixed in principle by the Member State concerned; specific arrangements may be laid down for minor border traffic; checks of external border posts are made in accordance with uniform principles; the Member States have undertaken to exercise surveillance on external borders between crossing points and of border crossing points outside normal opening hours; they have undertaken to deploy enough officers
to conduct checks and maintain surveillance along external borders; finally, the Member States concerned have undertaken to assist each other and maintain constant, close cooperation with a view to the effective exercise of checks and surveillance.

From the data supplied by the Honourable Member the Commission cannot conclude that Italy is failing to meet these commitments entered into under the Schengen agreement and now incorporated into the Union framework.

by Hanja Maij-Weggen (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(1 October 1999)

Subject: Enforcement of CITES Regulation

On 2 June 1999 a shipment of 35 Fennec foxes and 10 Demoiselle cranes (both in Appendix II of CITES) were flown by Lufthansa Cargo from Sudan to Frankfurt and from there to Johannesburg. On arrival at Johannesburg, three foxes were dead, one was dying and the others were in distress. Owing to the condition of the animals and a lack of proper health certification, the remaining 31 foxes were sent back to the Sudan, again via Frankfurt. The suffering of the foxes would have been alleviated if the proper obligatory veterinary checks had been carried out at Frankfurt airport.

Would the Commission say what steps it has taken to ensure that the conditions of the CITES Regulation are being enforced at airports in the EU, particularly Frankfurt, through which many millions of animals pass every year?

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission
(12 November 1999)

The Commission regrets that the terms of Article 9(5) of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (1) appear not to have been respected in the case mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission intends to draw the attention of the enforcement group, as set up by Article 14 of the Regulation, to this particular incident as well as to the control of transport of live animal specimens under International air transport association (IATA) live animal regulations and the necessity of appropriate controls at airports and other places of import for transit or transhipment purposes in the Community.


(2000/C 203 E/045) WRITTEN QUESTION E-1755/99
by Klaus-Heiner Lehne (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(1 October 1999)

Subject: Costs of employing Mr Hombach and his staff

On 10 June 1999 EU foreign ministers appointed Mr Bodo Hombach Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

This gives rise to the following questions:
1. Which persons are on Mr Hombach’s staff, and by which Member States have they been sent?
2. What are the staffing costs for employing Mr Hombach and his staff?
3. What proportion of the costs of employing Mr Hombach and his team comes from the EU budget?